

**Audio Sermons:** <https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/caboose-ministries/audiopodcast/id506049887mt=2>

**YouTube Channel** [for dramas, sermons, & puppet shows for kids]: **Michael Robert Guertin**

**Website:** [www.cabooseministries.org](http://www.cabooseministries.org) **Caboose!** **Facebook Site:** "Michael 'Guerty' Guertin"

*October 2021*

"PREACHING TO A BUNCH OF 'PHONYS'"



Dear **Friends & Family**,

[9/3] In the past two newsletters I gave extensive reports re: my three annual **Hopewell Summer Camps**. I did yet another camp this past summer-it was a "half-camp" for me, comprising only two days, as the two camps' schedules conflicted with each other quite a bit. Hence, the head of this camp & I made it work as best we could. This camp was in the inner city of Reading, PA. It was the same camp I ministered at for two weeks last summer in **2020** as all three of my Hopewell camps were canceled due to **Covid**. Despite being buried with my three camps this summer with the unusually high amount of warfare & stress they involved, I still wanted to minister at this Reading camp too. This camp is the front lines of ministry as far as I'm concerned. I always tell my host when I'm there it is one of my favorite places on the planet & that it is always an honor to be there & that I'd come & minister there even if he didn't give me a dime! Many of the kids & teens at this camp are unchurched-&, it's obvious. I know that discipline, grooming, & enforcing decency & order go with the territory of this camp, as I've been ministering in this venue on & off since the 1990's.



At one service many years ago, my host for this camp, a.k.a., *Joe Sclafani*, turned off the colored lights in the room along with the loud music, turned on the bright fluorescent lights overhead, stood on a chair [Joe is a BIG GUY!] & started yelling at the kids [in a fatherly-figure sort of way!]. *Our oldest son Matthew* was present & traveling with me at the time. I shall never forget it. I felt the respectful fear of God fall on me while Joe spoke. You felt rebuked but loved. Well, here I was with Joe again & a fresh batch of kids. Virtually all of them had phones. Yes, lower income inner-city kids-some of them quite young too. Just about all of them had phones. It reminded me of when I was helping to minister to a bunch of kids & young teens in the woods of poverty-stricken **Costa Rica**-& THEY had phones as well!

**“PHONES-A ‘DISS’-TRACTION”**



When someone “disses” another person, they basically write them off, besmirch them, disrespect them, etc. These children were doing it to me while I was trying to bring them the **Word of God**. I stopped the service & told them, “All phones in your pockets! No-not on your seat! In your pockets! In your pockets!”. I waited. I told them, “If I were reading comic books to you it might be different [though even if so that would still be disrespectful!], but this is the **Word of God** & what you do with what you hear determines the eternal destiny of your soul.” My dear brother & friend Joe, who has poured his life & soul out for this ministry for over 30 years, was putting on a puppet show for the kids. He had an out-of-state & out-of-country ministry team assisting him as well. I too, was backstage with my nemesis, er, I mean, little furry

creature friend, "**Chip**". Well, to keep the program's continuity going-an absolute must with children's services, I snuck out from backstage to be the emcee when the puppet show was over. I stood in the back behind the kids' chairs & lo & behold, many of them were playing games on their phones, not even watching the puppet show. My heart broke for Joe & the team. He & they didn't even know. Here they are pouring themselves out for the Lord, His work, & the young-& the young weren't even paying attention. It was one of the saddest things I've ever seen in my life-especially in light of the fact that Joe didn't even know they weren't watching. And his heart was so into it too. Hence, this explains why I had so much zeal to deal with the phones when I started preaching. This explains why we absolutely forbid cell phones at our **Hopewell Summer Camps**. It's one of the most important & best things we do to ensure the spiritual success of the camps!

### "ARRIVING AT 'EMERALD CITY'"



After serving at 3 & ½ camps this past summer, what does one do upon arriving home? Well, for me, I got hit with a severe sinus virus. It lasted for weeks. I tried to function but about all I could do was lay on the floor it seemed. When these debilitating "debacles" hit me-& they hit me way too often, I try to use them to my advantageà "lay & pray". Some of you may recall the scene from **The Wizard of Oz** [1939] where the 5 weary travelers, a.k.a., Dorothy, the Scarecrow, the Tin Man, the Cowardly Lion, & Toto all finally arrive at **Emerald City**-their long-awaited destination. Upon doing so, they get the red-or should I say, the "green" carpet treatment by the Emerald City's inhabitants. Dorothy gets her hair done & has a manicure, as does the Lion. The Scarecrow is stuffed with fresh straw & the Tin Man is buffed & shined. In a way, after a very stressful camp season re: the hardest I ever remember recruiting staff, spiritual warfare, etc., I needed my own personal "Emerald City"! It has been a time of catching up with those gifted in the medical profession. I've gone to a homeopathic doctor (for said sinus issues), had X-rays taken, had a Cat-Scan, had bloodwork done, gone to a chiropractor, to a dermatologist, & had a virtual appointment with my primary care physician. I had to put all of these concerns on a back-burner during camp season, & understandably so. Camp requires focus-intense focus, & every little thing comes your way during camp season to distract, dilute, & yes-pollute.

"I WANNA GO HOME!!!"



Speaking of The Wizard of Oz, another scene from that classic movie came to mind concerning my last camp. After months of prayer, preparation, study, meditating, amassing object lessons, costumes, props, actors, writing scripts, assigning cabins & staff to royal courts, setup, etc., here I was on-site. And, I was on-site at my favorite of the three camps: Kids Camp! And, like the Cowardly Lion when he walked with his four friends down the long corridor of the Wizard of Oz's castle, all he could cry out was, "I wanna go home!". I could not explain it, Beloved, but I woke up in the middle of the camp week one morning [& may I say it was the morning I was scheduled to give two staff devotions, teach a Bible class, do a Time Machine drama & preach that evening!] & "go home" was all I wanted to do. I was spent, empty, depleted, unmotivated, visionless. I felt I had given camps all I had to give. All I wanted to do was go home & lay on the floor of the backroom of our house before the Lord. I didn't even want Kim around. It had nothing to do with her of course. I'm lost without her. But-I just wanted to be "alone-alone"-with our Lord & no one else. I have been here before. I shall never forget preparing for many days for a camp in the Poughkeepsie, N.Y. area around 1999-2000. Our oldest son Matt was with me. However, when I got on site & was sitting on the bed in our room, all I wanted to do then as well was go home.

#### "STAFF INFECTION"?



I was honest with the camp staff that morning at staff devotions. I told them how I was feeling. I know in battle there is nothing worse for morale than being led by a disheartened leader. Welcome to most of the men of the Bible! And here I was, the pastoral director of the camp, wanting to go home. Had I become a "staff infection" to my team? This is a very insecure place, Beloved, when you come to the end of yourself. Your insecurities & fears begin to surface. Your pride definitely is exposed via fear of being embarrassed. And yet-& yet, I have been here before many times too-but never this severe.

#### "IF HE DOESN'T COME-WE'RE DONE"



As I gave myself afresh to the Lord, a text came to mind from **II Chronicles 20**. A vast confederation of the Lord's people's enemies came against them, greatly outnumbering them. To try & withstand them was futile. If the Lord did not come to their rescue, it was certain, total, annihilation. I have often wished the next scene had been produced in a movie. I can see it in my mind. The text reads, "...all the men of Judah, & their wives, & children, & little ones were standing before the Lord" [vs.13]. In themselves they were hopeless-& helpless. If the Lord did not come-& note very well, Beloved-He did NOT *have* to-they faced certain death-& a merciless, cruel one at that. As I've envisioned this biblical event in my mind, I've seen an Israeli family-father & mother, children, etc., holding hands together, standing on a desert plain with the wind blowing their hair & clothes & dust all around them. As they looked out toward the horizon, they saw the vast, God-hating, pagan army headed their way-solely bent on their destruction. Surely, "Take no prisoners!" was their cry. Their lives & safekeeping were solely & totally in the hands of *Another Person*.

["AND COME-HE DID!"](#)



The very next verse reads, "Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon..."The Spirit of the Lord came. He *came*. Everything changes when He comes. Everything. His presence, gifts, power, & enabling make all the difference in the world-& in the unseen world. When I have come to this place of "DEAD END" in myself-& it is not infrequently-I have told the Lord, "Lord, please show Whose ministry this really is. Lord? It's Your Son, Your Word, Your glory, Your gospel, Your Kingdom. Glorify Yourself." I told the staff that morning that being in this place of complete helplessness is one of the most frightening there is for a minister-& yet, one of the most secure-as you place yourself in the hands & faith-fulness of the Almighty Infinite One. He is always zealous to preserve His Own glory. I was filled afresh for all of my pastoral duties & tasks that

day even up to the end of camp. He “came”. May He continue to do so in this new season of Fall ministry. Amen.

Sincerely,

Michael

PS-a former little girl from kids’ church & camp decades ago reached out to me yesterday out of the blue. This is part of what she said: “...The few years I went to Camp is one of my favorite memories of my childhood.”



**\*Caboose! Commentary Corner:** [Our daughter Laura once said she’d love to have my old Bibles when I passed for all of the notes I have written in them over the decades. This was quite humbling to say the least, especially coming from one of your own children. Hence, I’ve decided to post each month random notes/comments from Bibles I have studied from]: “It is not just idleness that is the Devil’s playground; it is ALL of fallen human nature. We give him MUCH to work with.” (Mt.16:23) [M.R.G. 10/12/2016]



[Caboose! On the Loose!](#)  
[Looking Out for the Little Ones](#)

**Ministry/Events for OCTOBER:**

Oct. 3: Immanuel Church, Wilmington, DE: Boot Camp Youth Retreat Time Machine drama practice

Oct. 3,10, 17?, 24?, 31: Chip Sunday Show postings

Oct. 5: Petra Church, New Holland, PA: hsc camp board mtg.

Oct. 6, 13?, 20?, 27?: Cab!Talk Bible expository video postings  
Oct. 8, 9: Converge Church, Moorestown, NJ: "Boot Camp" youth retreat  
Oct. 10: Mt. Pleasant United Methodist Church, Colora, MD: Sunday a.m. service: preaching  
Oct. 13-27: Daphne, AL & Bay Village, OH: visiting our two oldest children & their families  
Oct. 16, 23, 24: My birthday, our anniversary, & Kim's birthday  
Oct. 24: Local Church, Cleveland, OH: Sunday service: preaching  
Oct. 31: Gospel tract distribution for Trick-O-Treaters at our home



\*Michael is an ordained *Elim Fellowship* itinerant Stateside missionary & is also licensed to preach the gospel by *Immanuel Church*, Wilmington, DE. *Caboose!* is also an affiliate ministry of *The Hopewell Network of Churches*. For 14 years he served on various local church staffs as their children's pastor. Since 2000 Kim & he have lived by faith, having no set salary, retirement, etc. to speak of. Yet-this is their calling at this season of their lives. Michael preaches God's Word & systematic theology, using both drama & visual aids, to all age groups, from children to senior citizens, either separately or combined. To help support this work [any amount no matter how small is greatly appreciated!], please make all tax-deductible gifts payable to: Elim Fellowship, c/o 1703 Dalton Rd., Lima, NY 14485, marking it "Preferred-Michael Robert **Guertin**" or you may click on the link below to give directly. Thank you! [click here](#)

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